

## ***Balancing our freedoms with security - The USA PATRIOT Act***

With several of its more controversial sections set to expire on December 31, 2005, Congress will take a critical look at the USA PATRIOT in the coming year. With the continuing threat of terrorist attacks on our homeland, it is vital that our federal, state and local law enforcement agencies have the tools necessary to keep us safe. However, the first victim of terrorism in our nation should never be the constitution, for as Ben Franklin said, "Those who sacrifice liberty for security deserve neither."

I am a cosponsor of the **Freedom to Read Protection Act of 2005** ([HR 1157](#)), a bill which would eliminate the provision that allows federal law enforcement officers to examine the lists of all the items you've taken out of your local library without a warrant, notice to you, or probable cause. In addition, I supported an amendment to the FY06 Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations bill ([H.R. 2862](#))

which, if it had passed, would have eliminated this provision. As Congress begins to take another look at this and other expiring provisions of the PATRIOT Act, I will continue to work to ensure that our national security efforts are balanced with the constitutional freedoms that our nation was founded on.

## **Press Releases**

[12/14/05](#) - Larson Committed to Meaningful Balance of Expanded Government Surveillance and Civil Protections

[7/20/05](#) - Larson: Rhetoric Must Meet Reality on Protecting America

## **Information from the Library of Congress**

- [USA PATRIOT Act Sunset: A Sketch](#)
- [USA PATRIOT Act Sunset: Provisions That Expire on December 31, 2005](#)
- [Libraries and the USA PATRIOT Act](#)
- [The USA PATRIOT Act: A Sketch](#)
- [The USA PATRIOT Act: A Legal Analysis](#)

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### ***Supporting our First Responders***

Supporting our police officers, fire fighters and emergency medical responders is one of the most important things Congress does. It is vital that municipalities have the resources to hire, train and equip these first responders as they work to keep our nation and local communities safe. I have continually worked to support programs that help first responders in the first district, including:

- **The COPS Program**

I have worked with my colleagues to fight for increased funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program, which has helped put 117,000 more officers on the streets in the past 10 years. In addition, I am an original cosponsor of [H.R. 5277](#), a bill that would reauthorize the COPS program and provide additional grant money for states and communities to hire, train and equip their police officers.

- **Bulletproof Vests**

I am a cosponsor of [H.R. 1708](#), the **Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 2003**. This legislation would extend funding for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program, a program which helps States, tribal, and local jurisdictions purchase armor vests for law enforcement officers, through 2007. Through this program, several local police departments in the First District have been able to purchase new bulletproof vests for their officers.

- **The FIRE Grant Program**

I am an original cosponsor of [H.R. 4107](#), the **Assistance to Firefighters Grant Reauthorization Act of 2004**, which provides grants and funding for training and equipment for fire fighters and first responders. Through this program, Fire departments all over the first district have received the critical funds they need to hire, train, and equip their firefighters.

### **Information from the Library of Congress**

- [The Community Oriented Policing Services \(COPS\): Background, Legislation, and Issues](#)
- [Assistance to Firefighters Program](#)
- [Assistance to Firefighters Program: Distribution of Fire Grant Funding](#)

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## ***AMBER Alert***

The best national estimates for the number of missing children are from incidence studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART 2) was released in October of 2002. According to NISMART 2 data estimates, there were 203,900 children abducted by family members, 58,200 children abducted by nonfamily members and 1,682,900 runaway/thrownaway episodes in 1999.

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[Learn more](#) about AMBER Alert and children's safety.

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## **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**

Since it was signed into law by President Clinton in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) has provided critical funding and services to victims of domestic, child, sexual and other kinds of abuse. In addition to setting up critical grant programs to aid state and local communities, VAWA changed federal law relating to interstate stalking, intrastate domestic

abuse, federal sex offense cases, and HIV testing in rape cases. It was reauthorized in 2000 and expanded to help prevent sexual assaults on campuses, provide transitional housing for victims of domestic abuse, and protect elderly and disabled victims of domestic violence.

I am a cosponsor of The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2005 ( [H.R. 2876](#) ), which would reauthorize VAWA and expand the act to improve services and outreach to victims, provide resources for sexual assault victims through rape crisis centers and state coalitions, and support prevention, health, housing and economic assistance programs designed to prevent violence and help victims.

Information from the Library of Congress

- [Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies \(House\): FY2006 Appropriations](#) (Library of Congress)
- [Violence Against Women Act: History and Federal Funding](#) (Library of Congress)

Information about services for victims of violence:

- [Office on Violence Against Women](#) (US Department of Justice)
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) - 1-800-799-SAFE
- [Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)
- [Office of Victim Services](#) (State of Connecticut)
- [Office of the Victim Advocate](#) (State of Connecticut)
- [Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services](#) (CONNSACS)

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## Legislation Introduced

### [H.R. 1405](#) □

Changes federal tax law to exempt property tax abatements or other incentives offered by local governments to volunteer emergency responders from income and wage withholdings.

#### **Press Releases:**

[4/25/03](#) - Dodd, Lieberman and Larson Call for Protection of Tax Relief for Volunteer First

Responders ( [Public Safety](#) )

**More Info:** [Volunteer Emergency Responders](#)

### [H.R. 4967](#)

#### **Nursing Home Fire Safety Act**

Requires all nursing homes participating in Medicare and Medicaid to have a sprinklers system within 5 years.

#### **Press Release:**

[8/24/04](#) - In Response to Fatal Fires, Larson Introduces Bill to Require Sprinklers in U.S. Nursing Homes ( [Seniors](#) )

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## **Caucus Memberships**

### **Congressional Fire Services Caucus**

The Congressional Fire Services Caucus is the largest caucus in Congress with over 340 members. Founded in 1987, the Caucus unites Republicans and Democrats in support of fire service legislation that benefits all first responders.

### [Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus](#)

The Law Enforcement Caucus is a bi-partisan organization created in 1994 to serve as a clearinghouse for information and grants and a sounding board for ideas from the law enforcement community.

### **Congressional Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus**

The Congressional Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus works to build awareness around the issue of missing and exploited children for the purpose of finding children who are currently missing and to prevent future abductions.

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## **Additional Cosponsorships**

### [H.R. 919](#)

#### **Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act**

Extends survivor benefits to the families of public safety officers who dies as the result of a heart attack or stroke suffered while on duty.

### [H.R. 1824](#)

#### **Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act of 2003**

Would classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as five-year depreciable property for tax purposes.

### [H.R. 2662](#)

#### **Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2005**

Authorizes the Attorney General to prevent crimes based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

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## Helpful Links

[CT Department of Public Safety](#)